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COMMUNISM IN AMERICA

BY

HENRY AMMON JAMES, B.A.

OF THE

LAW DEPARTMENT OF YALE COLLEGE

THE YALE JOHN A. PORTER PRIZE ESSAY

FOR 1878.

"Ach, da kommt der Meister!
Herr, die Noth ist gross!
Die ich rief, die Geister,
Werd' ich nun nicht los."

GOETHE.

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OF THE

JOHN A. PORTER UNIVERSITY PRIZE.

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"2. The Prize shall be awarded by three Judges, two to be appointed by the President of the College, and one by the Trustees of the Kingsley Trust Association; such Judges to be chosen or appointed on or before the first day of the second Academic term. The award of the Prize shall be announced on Commencement Day.

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Pursuant to the terms of the foregoing Foundation, the following Judges were nominated and appointed:—

The Rev. WILLIAM M. BARBOUR, D.D.,
Professor in Yale College;

The Rev. SAMUEL HARRIS, D.D., LL.D.,
Professor in Yale College;

HENRY B. HARRISON, Esq., M.A.

The Judges awarded the prize to the essayist whose paper bore the signature of "Nabilac."

1878.

PRIZE ESSAYIST:

NABILAC,

HENRY AMMON JAMES, B.A.,

Baltimore, Md.,

of the Senior Class in the Law Department.

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THE Author acknowledges special indebtedness to the following works:

Le Socialisme dans le Passé.—Thonisson. (Bruxelles, 1859.)

Communistic Societies in the United States.—Charles Nordhoff.

History of American Socialisms.—Noyes.

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Arbeiter Frage.—Lange.

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Der Socialismus und seine Gönner.—Treitschke.

Emancipationskampf des vierten Standes.—Meyer.

Histoire de l'Internationale.—Villetart.

Ferdinand Lassalle.—Georg Brandes.

Pauperism in England.—Fawcett.

Herr Bastiat-Schulze von Delitzsch.—Ferdinand Lassalle.

Arbeiter Lesebuch.—Ferdinand Lassalle.

History of the Commune.—Vesinier.

Les Publications Officielles de la Commune.—Pierotti.

COMMUNISM IN AMERICA.

THE subject of Communism in America suggests two widely divergent lines of treatment. The one, following a stricter definition of the term, would lead into an examination of the efforts which have been made in this country to form social organizations under the principle of a strict community of goods. The other would apprehend Communism in its unscientific, popular sense, including under one vague and inaccurate notion all organized attacks made by the dissatisfied classes upon fundamental social institutions. It is the difference between Communism pure and simple, and the comprehensive Communism of newspaper phrase. The one is practised in the existing communistic societies, and has no political significance. The other expresses the radical aspiration of the uneasy portions of the lower classes and their leaders, and reduces itself sooner or later to the Labor Question.

As there can be little doubt, assuming that we

shall before long learn as a nation certain elementary lessons in Political Economy and the Science of Government, which at present absorb our national energies, that the Labor Question will assume for us, as it has for England and for Germany, urgent and threatening proportions, I have chosen to take up my subject mainly in the latter sense. It will be my aim, then, to examine, though it will necessarily be inadequately, the nature and extent of such active hostility as exists in America toward the institution of private property, and to catch, if possible, the spirit of that movement which is fondly termed by its adherents the Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Classes.

In this sense, it might be suggested the subject would be more properly treated under the more comprehensive term Socialism, which leads to a further word concerning these two expressions, Communism and Socialism, partly in justification of the title of the present essay, partly to avoid subsequent confusion. The Socialists themselves deprecate the application of the term Communism to their doctrines. While defending the word from the unjust odium usually attaching to it, they maintain (on what slender grounds will appear in the sequel) that they do not advocate any extinction of the right of private property in the communistic sense. As for the meaning of the word in the

mouth of popular conservatism, so far from covering any definite classification, its boundary-lines are most vague and shadowy and exceedingly puzzling on nearer examination. Communism is, in fact, found to be a convenient name for ultra-radicalism, containing a touch of condemnatory opprobrium; and the prevailing notion of a communist is of a sort of irreconcilable, social Ishmaelite, who would revel with delight in anarchy and destruction. There can be little doubt that this invidious use of the word, connecting it inseparably with the idea of burning and plundering, this habit of confounding all social radicals with persons of criminal intent, has acquired extensive prevalence, especially since the events of March and May, 1871, in Paris. And the generalization has been the result of a course of reasoning not unintelligible, while containing much that is illogical and unjust. For, though the Paris Revolution of March was in name, and seemed at the time, essentially political, aiming only at the acquisition of the "Franchises communales;"[1] yet, as subsequent developments have shown, many of the men who were prominent then as leaders cherished plans of complete social reconstruc-

[1] "Paris n'aspire qu'à fonder la République et à conquérir ses Franchises communales, heureux de fournir un exemple aux autres communes de France."—*Proclamation officielle,* 6 *Avril, in "Publications officielles de la Commune," rédigées par Pierotti,* p. 128.

tion, and the influence of the socialist clubs was great and constantly widening.[1] The social aspect of that revolution has been the one to make the greatest impression abroad, where the peculiarities of French political institutions are little understood: and the confusion of terms has aided misconception. It may be said, too, that the language and actions of many of the refugees of that period, residing now in America, have been sufficient to damn the memory of a cause which was not so wholly criminal as its enemies have stamped it. These were the men who murdered bishops and generals, and who burned Paris. And with them are associated, in the popular mind, all who harbor similar social theories.

The enthusiasts of the labor movement, on the other hand, delight to call themselves Socialists. Nevertheless, if we can disburden ourselves in the beginning of unfair prejudices, Communism will better designate the movement than Socialism, which is in itself a wider, less distinctive term.

[1] The strongest OFFICIAL hint of communist tendencies, I find in a "Manifesto of the Committee of Twenty of Arrondissements" (quoted by Vésinier, Commune de Paris, 64), at the end of a long list of purely political objects, as follows: "(The communal idea implies) constant and assiduous researches to find out the best mode of furnishing the producer with capital, tools, markets, and credit, so as to settle forever the question of wages and horrible pauperism, and to prevent the return of their fatal consequences, sanguinary revenge and civil war."

Whatever may be said to the contrary, the plans of these reformers look to a direct, if partial application of the principle of community of goods; and whoever examines carefully these plans will hardly fail to be convinced that the fulfillment of their hopes would lead inevitably to a much more thorough application of that principle than the more moderate of the Socialists themselves contemplate.[1]

Before approaching the political agitations of today, it may not be unprofitable to cast a hasty, general glance at some past communistic experiments which are peculiarly American, and whose history contains more or less that is interesting and instructive in the present connection. Communism is sometimes assigned an earlier place in American history than properly belongs to it. King James I., in 1606, was graciously pleased to frame a code of laws for "his true and loyal subjects, certain gentlemen of London," who had undertaken to settle his Majesty's colony of Virginia under a charter for the

[1] "En un mot, nous voulions constituer la communauté de l'instrument de travail : et comme l'instrument de travail dans la langue économique comprend les machines, outils, capitaux mobiliers ou immobiliers, nous tendions donc bien positivement à la communauté de la propriété générale ; notre théorie de la première heure ne se distinguant de celle des communistes purs qu'en ce sens seulement, que hors de l'atelier, chacun disposait à sa guise de son avoir."—M. CORBON, *quoted by Villetart, "Histoire de l'Internationale."*

strip of sea-coast lying between parallels 34 and 45. In this product of royal leisure and royal learning there is a provision that the members of the company "shall trade together in a common stock."[1] The inference has been made that this was the kernel of a well-planned communistic scheme. But such an inference seems hasty and unjustified. It was hardly that, even in the mind of James himself; certainly not in the minds of the colonists. The association was more strictly a copartnership, intended to last only five years, a provisional arrangement suggested, indeed forced upon them by circumstances, and would have occurred to a duller imagination than that of the "wisest fool in England." And we find that the division of property, with the separation of private interests, took place before the appointed time. Similarly with the community of Plymouth Bay. The conditions of agreement formed at Leyden, in 1620, between the Pilgrims and "several merchant adventurers toward the voyage," provide, in Article 3, that "the persons transported and the adventurers shall continue their joint stock and partnership the space of seven years, except some unexpected impediment do cause the whole company to agree otherwise; during which time all profits and benefits that are gotten by

[1] See the instrument in Stith's Virginia, 32–41, and Burk's Va., i., 86–92.

trade, traffic, trucking, working, or any other means, of any other person or persons, shall remain still in the common stock until the division;"[1] and, in Article 10, "that all such persons as are of the colony are to have meat, drink, and apparel, and all provisions out of the common stock and goods of the said colony."[2] This has also been represented to have been a well-advised plan on the part of the Pilgrims to devote the New World to a communistic experiment. The Pilgrims, filled with their all-absorbing religious faith, stern and uncompromising in the application of Christian principles to practical living, and having in mind the supposed example of the early Christian community,[3] wished to break once for all from the traditions of a society whose natural outcome was sin and suffering and to initiate a new order. Such is the theory. It seems, however, to be without sufficient foundation. The Plymouth community, like that of Virginia, appears to have been in principle a copartnership.

The agreement with the Merchant Adventurers was simply a hard bargain driven with men

[1] Chronicles of the Pilgrims, edited by Young, 80-84.

[2] *Vide supra.* See, also, Robertson's America, b. 9; Bancroft, i. (161), 123; Morton's New Eng. Mem., 93; Baylie's Hist. Mem., i., 120, 158.

[3] Milman says: "Nothing like a community of goods ever appears to have prevailed in the Christian community. Mosheim appears to me to have proved this point conclusively."—*Hist. Chr.*, i., 389.

who were not generous enough to refrain from taking some advantage of the destitution of the other party. The provisions of the articles which have been quoted were plainly called for by the necessities of the situation. Close union was indispensable to carry this small family of pioneers through an undertaking as full of terrors for the imagination as of fatigues for the body. Only three years after the landing at Plymouth what was communistic in their plan had been tested to their satisfaction. The following is the homely, telling language of the chronicler: "The month of April being now come," he writes of the year 1623, "on all hands we began to prepare for corn. . . . . And because there was small hope of doing good in that common course of labor that formerly we were in; . . . . especially considering that self-love wherewith every man in a measure more or less loveth and preferreth his own good before his neighbor's, and also the base disposition of some drones, that, as at other times, so now especially would be most burdensome to the rest; it was therefore thought best that every man should use the best diligence he could for his own preservation,"[1] etc. Community of labor proving a hindrance, the system was changed at once, and without regret. Plainly they had no cherished communistic scheme. Nor

[1] Chron. Pil. Fathers, pp. 346 and 347.

is there further mention of any such scheme in the subsequent history of the colony.

The true date of the importation of Communism into America is much later than the settlement of Virginia or the landing of the Pilgrims. The origins of those societies whose characteristic feature is the practice of Communism, can be assigned to periods of emotional excitement tolerably well ascertained. They fall naturally into two classes, the religious and the non-religious or socialistic communities. All of them, however widely separate in manner of appearance, or subsequent development, have this one early element in common, that they are all alike expressions of revolt against ever-present, hardfelt evils, blind efforts to escape the inevitably burdensome in human life.

Charles Nordhoff, who made a tour of the communistic societies in the United States in 1874, reported eight only of sufficient importance to be taken into consideration for purposes of study and comparison. These eight societies have altogether seventy-two communes. He estimates their aggregate wealth at twelve millions of dollars; number of members, about five thousand, holding from one hundred and fifty thousand to one hundred and eighty thousand acres of land. Among them the Shakers are the oldest-established (having existed since 1782), and occupy a position of overwhelming

pre-eminence, both as to wealth and numbers. They have a membership of 2415 persons, 49,335 acres of land, and 58 communes. If with the Shakers we subtract from the list given by Nordhoff the Amana Inspirationists in Iowa (population, 1450; acres, 25,000), it will be seen to what unimposing dimensions the remaining six dwindle.

I do not purpose to enter here into any lengthy examination of these societies. The curiosity with which one approaches them is soon sated, and finally overburdened and disgusted with a weary, weary story of trivial details. I desire only to point out the utter vainness of all hopes which look to them for practical help toward the solution of perplexing social questions, and to show how groundless are the fears of those, if there be any such, who look upon them as a menace to existing institutions. All of these associations, with one exception, are essentially religious rather than socialistic movements. The slender legacies of those periods of emotional disturbance when the moral atmosphere of the masses seems swept with electric storms of feeling, they serve to remind us of long-forgotten times of exceptional religious excitement. And their sources lie so deep in the hidden corners of human nature, whose overflows are so governed by incalculable circumstance, that the prying eyes which would spy out their secret are baffled. As religious creeds they

possess no great intellectual interest. They are crude excrescences or grotesque distortions of popular Christianity, such as have always been familiar in the history of religious thought. The German mysticism of the Rappists, and of the Aurora and Bethel Communes, the modern spiritualism of the Shakers, together with the painfully minute ceremonial observances which mark them all to a more or less repulsive degree, indicate how far they are separated from the general course of modern thought.

Their founders were from the lower classes, and usually illiterate. Their following is, almost without exception, from the same station in life—dull, ordinary, uninteresting German and French peasants and the like. Indeed, of the societies referred to only two are properly American, the Shakers and the Perfectionists (Oneida, Wallingford), the remainder being importations more or less direct from Germany, France, Sweden, and Russia.

Most of them are linked with the fortunes of an individual. The society at Harmony, since the death of its founder, George Rapp, has been confessedly approaching with slow steps its final disappearance. It is improbable that the Aurora and Bethel Communes will long outlive the directing influence of Dr. Keil. And I have been assured by those who have had a nearer acquaintance with the

Oneida and Wallingford communities than is allowed a newspaper reporter, that only the predominating personal authority of Mr. Noyes can hold his flock together in the peculiar discipline in which he has trained it; an opinion rendered the more plausible by what we already know of the difficulties attending succession. The Shakers form an exception to this rule of dependence upon an individual.

These associations are not growing. They display no active propagandist spirit. On the contrary, one is struck, in reading, with their apparent indifference to the chances of extension and perpetuation. All of them, except perhaps the Oneida community, have seen the period of their greatest prosperity. They seem to have expanded temporarily at times of unusual religious excitement. The years between 1820 and 1825, and those between 1840 and 1846 appear to have been marked by large accessions of members. In 1823, Mount Lebanon, N. Y., the largest of the Shaker communities, and a fair example of all, had between five and six hundred members, whereas the number had fallen in 1874 to three hundred and eighty-three.

The suggestion which has sometimes been made, that these societies offer a practical refuge for the dissatisfied and superfluous working population, is hardly worthy of consideration. Most of them resemble close, thrifty, business corporations, devoted

to agriculture or manufacture. So far from being animated by any strong missionary spirit, the more prosperous ones are rather jealous of the admission of needy strangers. The Perfectionists are said to be "unwilling to receive new members." Nor should these communities be looked upon as living models encouraging imitation. They are eccentricities in the fullest sense; spontaneous, exceptional outgrowths rather than artificial creations. No normal unembittered mind, with strong, healthy aspirations, can contemplate their course of life without a feeling of strong repugnance. Whether it be spiritualism and celibacy among the Shakers, or the curious public inquisition called "criticism" and the scientific regulation of sexual intercourse among the Perfectionists, they are all alike linked too inseparably with religious oddity and unlovely superstition; they all alike go too far in denying the most fundamental impulses and longings of human nature to be phenomena of much practical importance in the study of social science. While individuality is lost in them in the machine-like evenness of routine, intellectual littleness leads into the eternal elaboration of rule and ceremonial. "Not a single action of life," says Elkins, speaking of the Shakers, "whether spiritual or temporal, from the initiative of confession, or cleansing the habitation of Christ, to that of dressing the right side first, stepping first

with the right foot as you ascend a flight of stairs, folding the hands with the right-hand thumb and fingers above those of the left, kneeling and rising again with the right leg first, and harnessing first the right-hand beast, but that has a rule for its perfect and strict performance." [1]

These religious communities are indeed no more than curious, isolated patterns in the checkered mosaic of modern civilization. Their existence is made possible only by the existence of the world about them. Like little helpless whirlpools that eddy and toss in forgotten nooks by the shores of a rushing river, they only indicate the nearness of the mighty current.

In the reference to the religious character of the existing communistic societies one was specially excepted. Far off, in a distant corner of Iowa, a little band of French peasants is still struggling to realize the social schemes of the dreamer Cabet. Through poverty, debt, discouragement, they have struggled with an enthusiastic resoluteness akin to fanaticism. They call themselves Icarians, and their mention leads us to the consideration of the communistic movements of which they are the remnant.

[1] Hervey Elkins, Fifteen Years in the Senior Order of the Shakers. Hanover, N H., 1850.

Apart from the religious communities which have been considered, and quite distinct from them in spirit, were the associations which derived their inspiration from Owen and Fourier. These were purely socialistic, formed to carry into practice the designs of avowed social reformers. They divide themselves naturally into two groups, referred to two distinct periods of time about twenty years asunder. Robert Owen came to this country in 1824. The success of his experiment at New Lanark, and the report of his great wealth, as well as the pure philanthropy of his motives, had already given him a reputation which removed him from the ordinary catalogue of social dreamers. Well received by prominent members of the Government, as well as by numerous philanthropic individuals, his views gained a speedy and wide dissemination, and abundant and enthusiastic aid was proffered him from all sides in furtherance of his experiment. Besides, the man who advertised comfort and plenty without cost, naturally did not want for applicants. But the story of his colony at New Harmony, its brilliant opening, its pitiable failure, is the old story of an exalted enthusiasm struggling with the sluggish and commonplace. In such contests the victory in the end is too often with the inert mass.

Noyes gives a list of eleven experiments made under the influence of the Owen excitement, none

of which endured more than three years. Owen and his movement are important now only in the story of social curiosities. The little society which he had formed among the factory hands at Lanark, strongly dominated by his personal influence, and which he had fondly imagined to be a microcosm fruitful of great results, proved to be no rule for the great world; and that "doctrine of circumstances" which seized him with all the force and flattered him with all the sweetness of originality, whose truth brought home to men was to revolutionize thought and reform the world, fell flat and fruitless upon ears that felt none of the mystic exaltation of inspiration.

The Fourieristic movement, which followed the Owen excitement after a lapse of some twenty years, was more extended and more avowedly hostile to existing social institutions. Many of those who had good-naturedly assisted in the attempted realization of Owen's plans, felt only that they were aiding in a charitable effort to establish homes for the destitute, dissatisfied classes, and did not pretend to be applying a lever which should, in the fullness of time, overturn the great boulder of private property obstructing the path of progress. Fourierism, on the other hand, records itself as perhaps, until the modern labor movement, the most direct and best-sustained attack that has been made upon the pres-

ent social order. Fourier himself belongs to that band of dreamers, be they philosophers, poets, statesmen, or merely sensitive natures pricked into an agony of enthusiasm by the sight of wrong and suffering, who have amused their leisure, delighted their poetic sense, fed their hunger for some more perfect justice, or labored with the true zeal of the reformer in striving to depict an ideal state of society where all the virtues should reign and all the vices be banished. A large part of their inspiration seems to have been handed down in a sort of apostolic succession from Plato on. There can be no doubt that Fourier borrowed much of his theoretic system from Morelly and Campanella; while many of the features of his *Phalanstères* show an evident study of the Households of the Hernhuters, that remnant of the followers of Huss who established themselves in Bohemia, on the borders of Silesia and Moravia, about the middle of the fifteenth century.

It is difficult for us now to realize either the wild hopes or the bitter fear and aversion which Fourier's writings at one time aroused. To a reader of to-day the description of his Phalanx, with its dizzying elaboration of detail, is at first entertaining, soon tiresome, and always more or less absurd. Hard above all is it to understand how the name of such a harmless dreamer could have been so heaped with obloquy by the respectable conservative classes.

His motives were high. He at least assailed real evils, if he offered no sure relief. And considerable interest must always attach to the name of a man whose schemes could attract the attention and the hopes of so earnest and conscientious a student of social conditions as John Stuart Mill.

In 1842 Albert Brisbane constituted himself the apostle of Fourierism in America. He first purchased a weekly column in the *Tribune*, in which translations of Fourier's writings were produced from time to time.

The venture proving a success, the weekly column soon became a daily one. Horace Greeley himself became interested in the movement. The seeds of the new philosophy seemed to fall upon ground ready ploughed to receive it. It is a suggestive fact that both the Owen and the Fourier movements, like the communistic agitation of to-day, followed not long after periods of commercial disaster, when a profound dissatisfaction with all surrounding facts would still be lingering in the minds of actual sufferers. Whatever be the explanation of the condition of the public mind, the ideas of Fourier spread like an epidemic. Many devout enthusiasts looked to the new revelation for a final solution of the great problem—how to make all men happy. Associations were quickly formed in all parts of the North and West to put

in practice the details of Fourier's scheme. Noyes gives a list of no less than thirty-four societies assignable to the Fourier epoch. The plan of the present essay does not lead me into more than a mention of these efforts, and an indication of their results.

Few of them held out more than four or five years. Most of them perished in a shorter time. The only one now left is the little band of Icarians in Iowa. The rest all shattered on the rock of individual selfishness. Their story may be amusing or saddening, according to the mood of the reader. There is the same endless repetition of hopes broken, illusions scattered; disagreeable actualities which no imagination could poetize; shiftless management, personal discomfort, discontent, suspicion, disagreement, a painful exhibition of the small, unlovely qualities of human nature, all resulting in the inevitable triumph of commonplace circumstance over ill-guided zeal.

So lost and gone are these experiments now, that their story will hardly be read, save by him whom curious studies lead into the paths of forgotten literature. Only one has a familiar sound; and Brook Farm owes all its interest to association with the names of Channing, Hawthorne, Curtis, and Margaret Fuller. But the brilliant inception of Brook Farm seemed to insure it only a more bril-

liant failure. And it is significant, that of all the literary men whose youthful enthusiasm shared in the undertaking, not one has seen fit to constitute himself its historian. Hawthorne's charming story[1] is the only reminiscence of this "Romantic Episode." The few direct criticisms which he has made upon his life at Brook Farm are exceedingly interesting, both because of their rarity, and as suggestive comments applicable to this whole class of communistic experiments. "It struck me as rather odd," he says in one place, "that one of the first questions raised after our separation from the greedy, struggling, self-seeking world, should relate to the possibility of getting the advantage over the outside barbarians in their own field of labor. But, to own the truth, I very soon became sensible that, as regarded society at large, we stood in a position of new hostility rather than new brotherhood." And again: "No sagacious man will long retain his sagacity if he live exclusively among reformers and progressive people without periodically returning to the settled system of things, to correct himself by a new observation from that old standpoint."

The rise and decline of Fourierism may be used to mark the transition from the old-school Communism to the new Socialism. The two, while inti-

[1] "Blithedale Romance

mately related so far as concerns their *raison d'être* and their ultimate tendencies, are very different in spirit and methods. The one was poetic, quasi-religious, the toy of enthusiasts and dreamers; broken to pieces as soon as brought into the rough field of practical experiment. The other is real and rude, working with ugly, actual forces, using without scruple the nearest material longings of human nature and its most dangerous passions. The one was unscientific and disdained political economy. The other puts itself under the leadership of men who boast of coming "equipped with all the learning of the age," [1] and boldly challenges the economists to battle with their own weapons. We pass at once from the domain of mere theory into the field of political agitation.

Recognizing always the impossibility of fixing with accuracy the exact date of any great social phenomenon, we may, for the sake of convenience, assign the first public advent of the movement we are about to consider to the revolutionary period of 1848.[2] The first French Revolution had witnessed the rise of the bourgeoisie and the overthrow of the politically privileged classes. After the waves of that

[1] Expression used by Lassalle of himself: "Bewaffnet mit der ganzen Bildung des Jahrhunderts."

[2] Von Sybel has shown that the earliest signs of the *proletaire* movement appeared in the first Revolution.

upheaval had somewhat subsided, expectation settled down with relief into a restful assurance of a time of peaceful, progressive development to come. The easy, confident conservatism of the Bourgeois succeeded to the jealous, watchful conservatism of the Noble. But time soon brought disappointment to flattering hopes. All the causes of social commotions had not yet been finally removed. A new class, glibly baptized the *Fourth Estate*, stepped quickly to the front with new demands; as if society having finally succeeded in throwing off an outgrown political husk, new and nicer questions of organization were now to occupy its energies. Before, it had been demand for political equality; now, it was to be demand for social equality. The middle classes could not foresee that a free, constitutional government, while it would not be able to lighten materially the burden of life to the unpropertied classes, would awaken in them a political consciousness which would give a tongue to dissatisfaction, and might become uncomfortably self-assertive. The labor legislation of the "Government of '48" is a speaking monument to the first entrance of a new difficulty, which was to rise up not only in France, but in the face of every free government, and as such it is heavy with meaning. I have ventured to dwell the more at length upon the experience of France, because of the foreign parentage of what-

ever of active socialism exists in America, and the necessity of bearing in mind the general circumstances of its birth in order to understand and estimate it. If we hesitate to give France the title "Mother of Freedom," we may at least, with less flattery and more truth, call her the mother of political agitation. It was from the other side of the Rhine that the impulse came which first set the German theorists actively to work. The conditions in Germany were favorable enough. It is true the pupils, especially considering the greater obstacles in their way, soon, in all points, surpassed their masters. And it is almost wholly from Germany that the American agitators draw their immediate inspiration. Of course in America, too, the heap of inflammable material was ready, waiting if perchance the torch of socialism might kindle it into a flame. Wide inequalities of wealth, pauperism, overcrowded centres of population, protracted periods of suffering, induced by commercial disasters, all brought with them their usual attendant strains upon the social framework. The unhappy antagonism between labor and capital was becoming well marked. And organizations of labor followed eventually, though later and more sluggishly, in imitation of the trades-unions which developed so rapidly in England after their legalization in 1824.

This was the field for socialism. How socialism

has entered it, how it is working there, with what spirit, purposes, and with what success, it will now be my endeavor to examine.

The advent of socialism to our shores is not definitely assignable in time. It has dribbled in upon us. Many of the refugees of the troubled times of '48 doubtless brought with them their untested visions of the workingman's paradise, with the brilliant, though cheap promises of Proudhon and Louis Blanc. Still more fervent spirits followed, after the suppression of the Commune in 1871. There still exists in New York a "Société des Réfugiés de la Commune," of whose presence the reader of the newspapers is reminded at yearly intervals on the occasion of their annual banquet to celebrate the Proclamation of the Commune. At their reunions they are accustomed to indulge in language of the most extravagant kind known to irresponsible impotence. They may occasionally cause a shock in the breast of some quiet citizen at his comfortable breakfast-table, or lend a hand in riotous demonstrations, but their existence is otherwise of little importance, as they have no particular influence outside of their own little circle.

In New York, as early as the winter of 1865, not six months after the death of Lassalle, was formed a little society of Germans, devoted to the cultivation of the principles taught by that great prophet

of socialism. This, however, came to nothing, and soon disappeared. Another attempt was made in 1868 to form a socialist party (Sociale Partei) under the influence of the Marx school, but with no greater success. These, however, were all merely incipient, tentative movements, of hardly sufficient importance to catch the notice of the daily press. The first extensive initiation of the American laborer into the new aspirations of the working-classes of Europe probably came through the International. Though the International was not strictly a communistic movement, it soon developed a strong communistic tendency—a tendency whose increase it favored, as is shown by the instructive story of the progress of communistic ideas at its congresses. At the first general congress, Geneva, 1866, no public discussion of the right of private property took place. The next year, at Lausanne, there was a significant symptom in the recommendation of the seizure and operation of all railroads by the state, though in general there was observable a careful avoidance of what was felt to be a dangerous subject. At Brussels, in the following year, formal attacks began to be made upon the institution of private property, while distinctions were beginning to become more marked, in a new and unintelligible jargon, between *mutualists*, *collectivists*, and *individualists*.

In the last congress at Bâle, the question of abolishing the right to the inheritance of property (l'héritage) received thirty-two votes in its favor, while there were twenty-three against it, and seventeen abstained. The views of Marx and his school were rapidly gaining the ascendant.[1]

The International found an organization ready at hand in America. The National Labor Union of the United States was said to contain, in 1868, six hundred and forty thousand members (according to some estimates as many as eight hundred thousand). It had been formed in 1866, as an amalgamation of trades-unions, to concentrate the forces of labor in array against capital, and to "work for the freeing of the workingman from the slavery of the wage-system." In 1869, Cameron appeared at Bâle as representative of this body, and a junction was formally effected. The International system of

[1] In a publication by a "French Positivist" (London, 1871), called "Political Notes on the Present Situation in France," the author thus sums up the International: "Their philosophy is atheism, materialism, the negation of all religion; their political programme is absolute individual liberty, secured by the suppression of all government, and the division of nationalities into communes more or less federative. Their political economy consists essentially in the dispossession, with compensation, of capitalists, and the transfer of their funds, of the instruments of labor, and of the land to associations of working-men. Their theory of history is that the nobility and bourgeoisie have had their time, and now that of the proletariat is come. They exclude from society all that which is outside of the working-class."

organization was introduced into America, and an active propagandist agitation begun. The ordinary instruments of agitation were used—speeches appealing to the workingmen, cheap newspapers, and numerous tracts chiefly from German and French sources. The American workman received his first lesson in the principles of the new, enlightened communism. It was from this period that the ideas of Marx and Lassalle began to obtain in this country a wider currency, through direct importation of their pamphlets, popular translations and genial interpretations by sympathetic followers.

With the dissipation of the International and its terrors for the anxious conservatism of Europe, the organization in America too faded and almost entirely disappeared. Not that the cause of the trouble and all occasion for further anxiety had been removed. The same difficulties were to appear in another and more outspoken form. Yet, while in the succeeding years the socialist movement was solidifying and slowly gaining in strength in Germany under the leadership of such men as Bebel, Liebknecht, and Hasenclever, until its principles had been incorporated into a recognized political party, and "das rothe Gespenst" had taken its place in the Reichstag as an orthodox and apparently permanent bugbear, the cause of socialism, strange to say, seemed to languish in republican, democratic

America, whether because of the absence of such constant, available irritants as a king and a class aristocracy, and a consequent inadequacy of persecution, or that the conditions here were more favorable to the spread of happy content, or from all these and other causes difficult of classification. But the seeds which had been planted in America were germinating in secret, as was soon to appear. The commercial reaction of 1873 brought suffering and discontent. Expectation watched from year to year with growing weariness and lessening patience for the termination of a period of distress which had at first been accepted with some popular resignation as an inevitable cyclic disturbance. The insinuating voice of socialism, preaching that all these troubles could never be removed until a radical change should be effected in the constitution of society, found in such a time more heedful listeners.

Signs of uneasiness among the classes most affected by the general suffering began to be visible. Attempts were made to reorganize the International. The incident of Tompkins Square, carelessly dismissed from most minds as an event quite to be expected in a populous, cosmopolitan city suffering from the effects of commercial stagnation, was elevated into historical importance by the socialists as the "first collision between the bourgeois police and the newly-discovered American proletariat."[1]

[1] Volksstaat, June 3, 1874.

Then came the riots of the summer of 1877. The sudden disclosure of so much inflammable material caused sober men of no alarmist tendencies to pause and consider possibilities before unthought of. This plundering, burning hatred of the rich fitted exactly into the popular notion of communism. The rapid spread of the infection, the mad fervor of the mob, offered an alarming glimpse of the possibilities of disorder in this country, while the spectacle of small groups of men seizing the opportunity to drive in and organize these wild forces under the banner of radicalism, bore an unpleasant resemblance to some of the methods of past revolutions in France. The prompt and effective energy of the forces of law and order, however, did much to reassure the public, and to enable it in a surprisingly short time to dismiss from mind a disagreeable and perhaps not too significant episode. And this light-hearted forgetfulness seems to have been justified by the easy settling down of things into their old grooves. Nevertheless, the riots of the summer of 1877 will always have a most important bearing upon the history of the progress of communism in the United States. Beside the inevitable spread of radical teaching incident to such a period of fermentation, they had the direct effect of consolidating the socialistic elements, forcing a more distinct declaration of principles, and of bringing them into the political

arena as a separate voting force, actively agitating for extension. As late as July, 1876, at the "Union Congress of the Workingmen's Party of the United States," it had been voted that the workingmen should "abstain from all political movement for the present and turn their backs on the ballot-box," in order to spare themselves "bitter disappointment." [1] The trades-unions had always expressly disavowed any tendencies of a political character. But the disturbances of this summer awakened in the proletariat (to make an ordinary though not strictly accurate use of the word) a sense, indeed an overweening sense, of its own strength. Those disturbances, as is well known, were followed at the next ensuing elections by extensive nominations of workingmen's candidates, and numberless extravagant speeches in which all sorts of unthinking threats and promises were made, and all sorts of wild schemes advanced.

A congress of the workingmen's party of the United States was held at Newark, in January, 1878. At this meeting the direction of affairs fell more than ever into the hands of the avowed socialists, whose plans did not stop short at trades-unions, and agitation to raise wages and reduce the hours of labor. Instead of the former title, the organization was now to be called "The Socialistic Labor Party,"

[1] See "Proceedings," etc., published by the Social Democratic Printing Association, New York.

a significant change. As this party is at once the expression and the depository of such communistic tendencies in America as are sufficiently important to deserve serious consideration, I shall attempt here to give some notion of its workings. Ephemeral associations spring up from time to time expressive of radical tendencies more or less hostile to existing social institutious; but this one contains the men who are working with a well-defined purpose, which is the overthrow of the present system of production on the basis of private capital, and whose labors are cast in a tolerably well-advised, consistent plan. They are striving continually to marshal under their banner all available material. And however ready they might be upon occasion to make use of the mob, they recognize fully the fact that their only hope of ultimate success lies in the conversion of the steady, working classes to the cause. Toward this end, accordingly, all their efforts are bent; and the methods employed are simple and to the point. A regularly organized system of agitation obtains under the direction of a central, executive committee whose seat appears to be at Chicago. Certain leaders of the movement, known in the language of their class as "agitators," who by reason of their personal influence and oratorical ability are specially fitted for the work, make regular tours of the principal cities and manfacturing

towns, haranguing the workingmen in public and interviewing individuals personally. Wherever they succeed in interesting a sufficient number, they leave behind them loose organizations under the leadership of a secretary, whose duty it is to keep alive the connection with the other branches of the party. These local organizations are called "Sections." They usually have a place of meeting, where the members, and any others who may desire, come together weekly for purposes of general discussion and to listen to addresses.

They are the nurseries, the training schools of socialism. Through them the devotees of the movement strive to inoculate the laboring classes with the spirit of their own faith, working with a patient zeal of which the outside world has little suspicion.

The agitators make the large manufacturing centres their principal points of attack. A prominent agitator once gave me an interesting account of his experience with the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company of New Hampshire, a corporation which at one time employed as many as seven thousand hands. When he first approached the village of the company he was confounded with the emissaries of the trades-unions and warned off by the authorities. His second trial was more successful. It having become known that he had no connection with the unions, but on the other hand preached

strongly the inadvisability of strikes, his entrance was in every way encouraged, the courtesies of the village were extended to him, and the public hall was opened for his use. In his public address then he carefully avoided all violent or revolutionary language, striving at the same time to interest the men in his promises. At the end of his speech he requested such of the men as wished to learn further of his party and its plans to meet him at an appointed place. Those who met him in pursuance of this invitation were initiated more fully into the purposes of socialism and encouraged to form themselves into a section.

He complained however that within the precincts of these powerful manufacturing corporations the men were so thoroughly dominated by fear of the "bosses" that, though often interested, they hesitated to enter into any formal association; and that the better paid workmen, even where they were by no means satisfied with their condition, yet evinced a disposition to treat his promises with some suspicion and cynicism. During the summer and winter just past, sections were formed in more than fifty different cities throughout the country. By far the larger number of these, as well as the more flourishing, are German. Their strength is mainly in the West. In the eastern cities the English-speaking sections seem to have great difficulty in keeping up

an existence. I found in January that the English-speaking section in Baltimore had ceased to hold its weekly meetings. And the secretary there, an active, well-appearing man, employed in a shoe-factory, who lived with his wife and four children in two rooms, and who assured me that, owing to stoppage of work in the factory, he had not for six weeks been able to earn more than four dollars a week, told me, in a plaintive description of the affair of his Section, that he could not collect money enough to pay for his correspondence. No Section has succeeded in Washington. In New Haven an English-speaking Section, with weekly meetings, has been kept up with some vigor.

I have been an occasional attendant at these gatherings, and have watched with keen interest the hard-featured faces turned eagerly to catch some ray from the newly risen, doubtful light of socialism. To judge from the general appearance of the men present, most of them seemed to be from the class of day-laborers. Only here and there could a face be discerned which a certain indefinable touch of intellectuality distinguished from the rest and marked as belonging to a higher paid workman or mechanic. They sat together in close, impressive silence, listening with contagious attention to one after another of their number, as they rose and told their stories, of the tyranny of "bosses," of the hunger

and suffering of families, of fruitless searches for work. It was not a wise or well-informed discussion of the labor question and of the proper means of alleviating distress; but only a blind, passionate presentation by each of the severity of his own lot. Now one would proclaim with indignation the name of some comrade whom timidity or venality had made a backslider. Now another would urge them in wild, threatening language to revolt. The sharp-faced, fierce-eyed man who stood with right hand uplifted in unconscious eloquence and voice ringing high and shrill with excitement, as he announced that three fourths of the voters of this country were workingmen, held in base subjection by the rest, offered in himself a vivid picture of that simple logic of numbers whose power with the masses it seems impossible to undermine.

Then again I have seen the rough audience, its energies already tried by a long day of physical labor, grow weary and restless under the long-sustained, high-pitched enthusiasm of some professional agitator, who maintained a too persistent tone of passionate appeal. One by one the listeners would steal guiltily from the room with painfully hopeless efforts to escape observation, often in the midst of the pointed upbraidings of the speaker, whose fervid oratory was suspended for the moment to admit a parenthetical rebuke of the conscious truant for his

faint-heartedness. It is at such times that one is impressed with the hopelessness of the task of holding such men up to the constant, patient, intelligent devotion necessary in the unequal struggle with vested private interests.

Before entering more fully and more specifically into the actual workings of this radical movement, I wish to turn attention to what may be called the science of socialism as it is cherished by the better-informed of its leaders and by some men of acknowledged learning and ability in Germany. Some preliminary introduction will be necessary to obtain a patient hearing and thoughtful consideration of demands which most of us are in the habit of dismissing with little ceremony.

I have had an opportunity of making the personal acquaintance of one of the leaders in the socialist movement, a man who is widely influential among the workingmen throughout the country, and whose name acquired unpleasant notoriety among the order-loving at the time of the Tompkins Square troubles. No one could correspond less than he to the popular notion of a communist. Small, modest, inoffensive in appearance, his physique is as far from suggesting brutal force as his character is removed from violence. He was apprenticed when quite young to the piano-making trade, and still works in a shop. His interest in the socialist movement was

first aroused by participation in the great eight-hour strike of 1872, in New York, when, though still very young, he was deputed by his comrades to meet the masters in conference, and was completely silenced by the arguments used by the latter to prove that they could not possibly, in the then state of trade, give the same pay for less work. It was then that the meaning of competition began to dawn upon him. While his sympathies justified the aspirations of his companions to improve their condition, his reason could not but admit the force of the masters' position. From that time he devoted himself eagerly to study. He taught himself German. Unfortunately his first intellectual hunger was fed for the most part upon newspapers, and socialist tracts and pamphlets, which gave his mind in the beginning a decided bias. He now delights to call himself a positivist, in imitation of most of the socialist leaders. While studying with great interest the curious, ill-assorted mass of half-knowledge which makes up the sum of his intellectual acquisitions, and the fitful, often confusing ramblings of a mind naturally gifted with unusual acumen and initiative activity, but lacking all systematic training, I have learned to look upon his character with esteem, and to recognize in him a disposition subject to the purest impulses of affection. He has the virtues which go to make up a valuable citizen. He is

steady, industrious, honor-loving. He abstains entirely from strong drink, and does not even treat himself to those unsinful little indulgences which are by common consent adjudged necessary to make bearable the sharp edge of existence. His personal moderation might indeed well be an example to many a zealous but unsteady pillar of the existing order of things. He does not seem to be discontented with his individual lot, or ill-naturedly envious of his neighbors; and I have failed to discover in him any trace of that self-seeking spirit which is so barefaced an element in the composition of the ordinary demagogue. A sensitive nature stirred into passionate sympathy by the sight of the misery and degradation of his class, he has ardently adopted a cause which also flatters his self-love with a sense of high purpose and great ends. He has the sublime, unconquerable confidence of enthusiasm. His faith sees a never-dimmed vision of success in the future. But it is with him as with almost every one who pursues absorbingly one great end, however lofty the feeling which inspires him—he is not nicely scrupulous about means.

I have rested here upon the character of this man with special purpose. Intercourse with him has done much to moderate my own view of a cause which I had been in the habit of regarding with the orthodox horror as a thing wholly unclean. He is

not, to be sure, a fair sample of the ordinary Socialist. It would be safe to say that very few of the participators in the movement are so high-strung. But such men introduce us to one aspect of Socialism which is often overlooked. For with all this empty noise, this loud display of fatuitous ignorance, which disgusts and repels the serious observer at the outset, there is mingled a true voice of complaint, telling a tale of no little meaning, and deserving at least thoughtful examination and perhaps sympathy. It has been the almost universal practice to meet the dissatisfied, questioning workingman with a bristling array of economic laws, driving him back into dogged resignation, full of repressed but still smoldering fire. There can be no hope of gaining a profitable understanding of the true animus of modern Socialism unless it be approached in a totally different spirit. The habit must be given up of simply dismissing with a sneer him who hurls himself at an economic law as mad or criminal.

The possession of private property, the hope of its possession, or association in its benefits, no less than its absolute deprivation, carries with it, it should be remembered, a powerful and most insidious bias. Each attack arouses a passionate instinct of self-defense, and every questioner of its right to existence is looked upon as a hateful enemy. He

who wishes to approach conscientiously, as a student, not eagerly as an opposing advocate, the questions propounded by Socialism, will be always suspicious of himself, lest his reasoning be lead, be it ever so little, by interest.

The attainment, too, as far as possible, of a judicial state of mind, will be the best promise of effective contribution toward a permanent reconciliation between the wage-taker and the wage-giver. In order to value properly the demands of the Socialist, an effort must be made to gain his stand-point. And to this end it will be necessary first of all to consider the most unflattering side of the existing social order, to reflect, not upon what it has accomplished, but upon what it has failed to accomplish.

This is the starting-point of the Socialist. He sits in judgment upon the experiment of society built upon the foundation of private property and pronounces it a failure. He calls attention to the wide inequalities in the distribution of material and intellectual good things. He points to the ignorant, toiling thousands, and then to the hundreds who harvest the products of their labor. He looks with sceptical eye upon the much-lauded conquests of civilization. He throws a doubt upon the good of so-called progress. These things, he says—the acquisitions of science, the cunning children of invention, the glorious creations of art, all that is written

in the proud list—may indeed widen the circle of possible gratifications, sharpen sensibilities, and add keenness to enjoyment for the few; but as for raising the race, do not these same advances call into being additional thousands of human creatures, whose plodding task it is from birth till death to satisfy the mere conditions of living, who swell the ranks of paupers and criminals, who at frequent intervals must be decimated by suffering in order to accommodate an economic readjustment? What reason have these to feel proud and grateful in the contemplation of the wonderful gains of modern science? Is it for having created a reason for their existence as its merely mechanical servitors?[1] Is it a great end to look forward to—the enabling of the earth's surface to support a larger population divided into a small class of those who understand and enter into the spiritual enjoyment of ever-widening knowledge, sharing the while in the material benefits of each advance; and on the other hand a far larger class of those whose time and energies must ever be solely taken up with benumbing physical labor in the service of this same progress. The Socialist marshals the vices and follies of the rich

[1] "Es ist Thatsache, dass das Elend der arbeitenden Massen nicht abgenommen hat während der Periode 1848–1864. Und dennoch steht diese Periode mit ihrem Fortschritt von Industrie und Handel beispiellos da in den Annalen der Geschichte."—KARL MARX, "*An die Arbeitende Classe Europas.*"

side by side with the wretchedness and degradation of the poor in eloquent juxtaposition. Do not the widest differences between luxury and squalor, he asks, the greatest disproportion in number between those who enjoy and those who want, exist in the very centres where civilization is most intense.[1] He will lead you from the spectacle of all the studied appliances of wealth in a large city, to the contemplation of its tenement-houses, its hovels, where the human working animal recuperates nightly for the ever-returning toil of the morrow, or to some great factory full of its dull, busy watchers, and dwell upon the ever-present crying dualism in the human lot.

It is hard to deny facts. There are indeed two sides to progress. Few who have entered more closely into the study of social conditions have pre-

[1] The following figures are taken from the "Journal of the Statistical Society," London, vol. XXXVII., p. 253.

Years ending at Lady-Day.	Population (Eng.).	Total No. Paupers.	Ratio.
1866	21,100,000	916,152	4.3
1867	21,320,000	931,152	4.4
1868	21,540,000	992,640	4.6
1869	21,760,000	1,018,140	4.7
1870	21,980,000	1,032,800	4.7

Professor Schmoller, one of the most conscientious of modern investigators, says: "In Bezug auf die Irren und die Selbstmörder zeigt die Statistik eine regelmässige Zunahme in den Ländern der intensivsten modernen Cultur."—*Ueber die Resultate der Bevölkerungs u Moral-Statistik*, p. 13.

served that easy optimism with regard to the social order which belongs to absorption in immediate personal occupations. "Hitherto it is questionable," says Mr. Mill in a memorable passage, "if all the mechanical inventions yet made have lightened the day's toil of any human being. They have enabled the same population to live the same life of drudgery and imprisonment, and an increased number of manufacturers and others to make fortunes." [1] And an eminent German writer of no radical tendencies expresses himself thus strongly at the prospect offered to labor by the extension of the factory system: "It is well written over the gates of Hell, *Lasciate ogni Speranza.* Really no one can deny that these conditions are most pitiable. Labor is indeed man's lot upon the earth, and every mortal can and must learn to submit to manifold privations. But if labor is to be purely mechanical, eternally unchanging, dulling both mind and body, and in return for it only such wage is to be given as will barely furnish the necessities of existence, then indeed is much expected of human patience and power of renunciation." [2]

Let me quote here, too, a passage from Mr. Frederic Harrison, in which (not to accuse him of intentionally furthering the schemes of Marx and Lassalle)

[1] Political Economy, bk. iv., ch. 6, sec. 2.

[2] Robert von Mohl, Politik, ii., 518.

he has put the socialist complaint in his inimitable language with such force that it has become a favorite text with the Socialists themselves. "A society in which generation after generation passes away, consolidating vast and ever-increasing hoards of wealth, opening to the wealthy enchanted realms of idleness, luxury, and waste, laying on the laborer, generation after generation, increasing burdens of toil, destitution, and despair; a society in which capital has created a gospel of its own, and claims, for the good of society, the divine right of selfishness, the right to exert its powers at will indefinitely for the indulgence of its own desires, rebelling against any social control, and offering up 'with a light heart' the misery and degradation of the poor, as a sad but inevitable sacrifice on the altar of competition—such a society these workmen of Paris will not forever tolerate." [1]

The Socialist seizes eagerly upon the fact, which most observers and economists are ready to admit, though trustworthy statistics directly to the point are difficult of access, that in modern civilized States, under the present industrial system, wealth tends to accumulate in fewer hands, through the extinguishment of the man of moderate means; that small enterprises have less and less opportunity, and that, consequently, the facilities for the existence of labor

[1] The Revol. of the Commune, *Fortnightly Review*, May 1, 1871.

and capital combined in the same person become fewer and fewer. The result of this tendency, he asserts, is to divide off more and more distinctly the two classes of wage-givers and wage-receivers, and to increase the dependence of the latter.

It must be borne in mind at the same time that the Socialist does not think of ascribing the diseases of the social body to inherent defects of human nature. In most cases he will reject the idea with scorn. The perfectibility of human nature is the corner-stone of his faith. To him all faults are explained by a faulty social organization and the abuse of the right of private property. "Le socialisme," says Proudhon, "affirme l'anomalie de la constitution presente de la société et partant de tous les établissements antérieurs. Il prétend et il prouve que l'ordre civilisé est facile, contradictoire, inefficace; qu'il engendre de lui même l'oppression, la misère et la crime: il accuse, pour ne pas dire la calomnie, tout le passé de la vie sociale et pousse de toutes ses forces à la refonte des mœurs et des institutions."[1] This fundamental denial enables the Socialist to avoid the usual arguments drawn from economic laws arising out of existing social conditions—and logically, from his stand-point. He would change the conditions themselves. Thus he will answer objections based upon the inevitable effects

[1] Système des Contradictions économiques, i., 4.

of competition by saying that competition is, above all, the evil which he wishes to abolish; in the system he contemplates there will be no competition. The reply at once springs to the lips: but it is as sensible to talk of abolishing human nature itself as to talk of abolishing competition; all the advances which man has made in the face of the forces of brute and inanimate nature have been made by virtue of this very principle. Here, it is evident, the point of attack is changed. If your antagonist be of the French school of Socialism, he will probably be willing to meet you upon this ground, and assert that more worthy things yet might have been accomplished had no such principle existed, had men worked together like brothers, combining their forces. But if he be of the more advanced German type, he will shift the issue to still another ground, and rejoin perhaps somewhat as follows: True! let us admit that all that has been accomplished hitherto has been through competition; we do not mean to undervalue the past; we maintain only that the time will come, nay, is already come, when, having gained the vantage-ground which we occupy, and yielding up none of it, we may throw aside the old weapons necessary to its attainment and take up new ones fitted for higher victories; we must enter upon a new course of higher and truer development, one which need not and shall not build so much upon

individual selfishness; the old methods, too long retained, are already retarding us; the socialistic scheme is the only one which can lead all men alike to higher perfection.

Thus it will appear the differences between the Socialists and the Economists lie deeper down than the laws of rent, profits, supply and demand, cost of production, and the like, a fact the neglect of which leads to much barren discussion. The true matter in controversy is the essential constitution of human nature, and the fundamental relations of man to natural forces. Out of these are drawn the ultimate justification of economic laws, and here are to be found the facts over which the Socialist stumbles. The intelligent defender of society as constructed upon the assumption of private property can not contend that it is absolutely good, or even the best imaginable, but only that it is the best practicable.

This suggests the appropriateness of a word with regard to the attitude of the new scientific Socialism toward the most recent advances in science and in philosophical thinking. The introduction generally of historical comparative methods, and the application of the theory of evolution to explain the development of institutions, dealt a mortal blow to the whole fabric of social philosophy built upon the "compact and natural rights" theory, which culminated and became popularized in the latter half of

the eighteenth century, and is usually and sufficiently well designated by association with the name of Rousseau. While it is true that many fallacies ascribable to a lurking assumption of the existence of natural rights, in the sense of the school of Rousseau, appear strikingly still in the writings of the leading French Socialists—Cabet, Proudhon, and Louis Blanc—and still, of course, taint the reasonings of all the less carefully informed of the Socialists, the more advanced German school, on the other hand, have forsaken the old stand-point, and boast of being abreast with the latest science. They reconcile their position with the closest allegiance to Darwin. The argument has in part been already suggested. Lange takes up the two principles—the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest—and defends from this position the struggle of the workingman to change his condition. If the working-classes find their situation intolerable and hopeless, their efforts to bring a about social order in which their happiness will be better assured are made but in fullfilment of their own law of existence. The test of fitness is survival. If the new order be the destruction of the present social organization, it will be by virtue of its own superior fitness. Lange's ingenious use of the Darwinian hypothesis illustrates well the manner in which the more advanced Socialists adapt the latest methods of thought to their own ends. "But," he

says, "as these advantages are dependent upon better nourishment, bodily exercise, more leisure, and more favorable opportunities for the development of all the faculties, so it is just as certain, on the other hand, that uniform and straining labor, or the constant practice of a wearisome and difficult manual art, exerts a lasting influence upon the individual; and that the effects of this influence are perpetuated by inheritance, and thus, by the union of adaptation and transmission by inheritance, gradually types of working-classes are formed with ever-increasing distinctness."[1] From this he goes on to point out the constantly threatening danger that "the laborers in the industrial régime, under the dominion of capital, may sink to the condition of a race physically and spiritually inferior."[2]

The new Socialism begins, then, by arraigning the existing social system; points out with unsparing finger its shortcomings, and, not content with being merely destructive, proceeds to offer a practical substitute. It proposes to introduce an order of things in theory more just and happier in effect. As it is not indigenous in America, but strictly an importation, it will be necessary to go to the German fountain-head in order to gain a clear comprehension of its methods.

[1] Friedrich Albert Lange, Die Arbeiterfrage. 55, Dritte Auflage. Winterthur, 1875.

[2] Ubi supra.

Marx and Lassalle are familiar names in both continents. The influence, especially of Ferdinand Lassalle, the great prophet of Socialism, exercises almost undisputed sway over a large body of devout followers scattered throughout Germany and America, whose watchful zeal and missionary ardor make up the main strength of the socialistic movement. This position of dominance is hardly rivaled even by that of Karl Marx.[1] The strange terminology of the latter, and his abstruse encounters with the economists, make the reading of his longer treatises, such as his famous "Kapital," a matter of painful industry, and remove him farther from the appreciation of the ordinary man. His objects of attack and his plans for the future organization of the State are, in the main, co-ordinate with those of Lassalle; the principal differences between the two being in their immediate introductory purposes. The features which particularly distinguish the Marx movement are—the emphasis which it lays upon the necessity of international co-operation, uniting in an international organization the efforts of the workingmen of

[1] Karl Marx, born May 2, 1818, at Trier; the son of a royal Prussian Oberbergrath; studied law at Bonn; married a sister of herr Von Westphalen, a member of the Manteuffel Ministry. His studies led him into extreme Socialism. He renounced the diplomatic career, which was open to him, became a fugitive from Germany in 1849, and has since resided in London. "Das Kapital," his most important work, was published in 1867.

all nations, and its encouragement of strikes and trades-unions. Lassalle's movement was strictly national. It may be said, too, that there is more virus in the unscrupulous revolutionary spirit of Marx than in Lassalle's reliance upon a gradual reconstruction. Since the union of the two sections of the Social Democratic Party in Germany, at Gotha, in 1875, however, the two schools have been rapidly drawing together.

The personality of Lassalle is an exceedingly interesting one. Its study is full of instruction for the observer of modern ultra-radical tendencies. The son of a wealthy Jew in Breslau, manifesting in early years unusual intellectual activity, sent to the University, where he soon gave proofs of uncommon ability; later, a shining member of a brilliant circle in Berlin, in which he was dubbed by Von Humboldt "das Wunderkind," earning his first laurels by the publication of an extensive treatise upon the philosopher Heraclitus of Ephesus; distinguished for his personal fastidiousness and the ex cellence of his social entertainments, Lassalle, one would think, judging from the circumstances of his early life, ought to have been an intellectual aristocrat rather than a popular agitator. And then the latter half of his life, so abruptly divided from the former; his strange association with the Countess Hatzfeldt; his short course of mad popularity, cul-

minating in his triumphal progress through the South German States in the summer of 1864, closing forever at the end of that same summer in an ignominious death got in a duel arising out of an unedifying love affair, in which his enormous vanity developed unsuspected littlenesses—all united with his brighter student experience to make up a career in which was curiously exhibited the union of mental power with the frailties and excesses of that very human nature upon whose sturdiness and self-control his ideal political system must above all base itself.[1]

Lassalle takes up, first of all, Ricardo's law, that wages can not be permanently sustained above the cost of subsistence, above the figure which will barely enable the laborer to support himself and to multiply sufficiently to satisfy the demand for labor. He calls this law "Das eherne Lohngesetz," and maintaining stoutly its uncompromising application, he demonstrates from it the utter hopelessness of the situation of the laborer so long as the wage system is retained. Upon this text he rings the changes with insistent repetition and ingenuity. As the wage system is the inevitable result of production by the use of private capital, he proposes to remove all the "means of labor" from the control

[1] He adopted as a motto the line from Virgil,

"Flectere si nequeo Superos, Acheronta movebo."

of private individuals and to make them a common possession. "Capitalism" ("private capital," "capitalistic production") has had its day, and must give way to community of production. Under the expression "means of labor" seem to be included all the instruments of production with the capital necessary to employ them, and these are to be the property of the community. The individual is to have private property in his direct earnings only. There is no time here to give an adequate description in detail of the socialistic state. All contingencies are provided for with a painful particularity that would fill volumes. And one who has made himself at all acquainted with the logically constructed, intricate edifice of Rodbertus, Marx, and Lassalle, however he may disagree with their fundamental assumptions, will feel that any attempt at partial representation would necessarily be unfair. Suffice it to say that their scheme contemplates the assumption by the State of the control of a network of industries, embracing almost all the activities of life, whose intricate vastness appals the imagination. All products would be stored in public storehouses; all labor would be paid in certificates issued upon a principle, propounded by Marx, of the measure of value by the "social working time" (gesellschaftliche Arbeitszeit). These certificates would be exchangeable for commodities. Rent, interest on money, profits of

trade, all opportunities of personal enrichment, would be forever put away. By the perfect system of supervision to be introduced, by the mutual, harmonious relations of all industries and occupations, working toward the same end, freed from the disturbing influence of competition, production would be adjusted with approximate accuracy to the wants of consumption, and thus phenomena of over-production, followed by periods of distress, whose painful consequences fall with such terrible weight upon the lower classes, would be unknown. Of the indirect benefits which are to result by reason of the removal of the causes of many of the vices which now afflict society, the Socialist draws an eloquent picture. It should be said, too, that the Socialists maintain that their scheme would not be inconsistent with privacy in living and the sanctity of the family; indeed, that it would not abolish private property, inasmuch as each would have full freedom in disposing of his own earnings. It is the retention of this faded specter of private property which justifies them, they think, in denying that their scheme is communistic.

The carefully elaborated details of the ultimate dream of Socialism have no great practical importance, and are not of so much interest to the present discussion as its more immediate purposes and the steps proposed in order to realize them.

Lassalle, a follower of Hegel, had imbibed to the full from his master his ideas of the function of the State as a civilizer. All his hopes, all his schemes center in the State. Not only did he look to the State as the future, ideal dispenser of all that is good, but he expected to make use of the State, under its present imperfect construction, to initiate and effect the proposed transformation. This deification of the State is the quintessence of the Socialist's political aspirations. It is the proper antithesis of the old uncompromising *laisser faire, laisser passer* doctrine, which regarded the State as a necessary evil, and reduced its functions to a minimum.

But Lassalle took credit to himself for recognizing society to be an organism of gradual growth, and did not advise a sudden revolution. The metamorphosis was to be accomplished by, what seemed to him, gradual, wholesome changes. He believed that two centuries would be necessary for the complete suppression of the wage system. The mention of the first step which he proposed in his series of easy changes may provoke a smile. It was no less than the establishment of a loan fund by the German Government, to supply capital to co-operative associations of workingmen for purposes of production. He asked for an initiatory fund of 100,000,000 thalers, to supply 400,000

workingmen, at an annual interest of two per cent. It may be said here that Lassalle discountenanced the formation of co-operative associations in the manner at present in vogue, by *private* enterprise, for much the same reasons which led him to discourage strikes. He thought them not only necessarily ineffectual, but absolutely harmful, wasting the strength of the workingmen, deluding them with false hopes, turning them from the pursuit of proper measures, and in the end only welding more firmly the chains of "capitalistic despotism." His most bitter controversy was with Schultz-Delitsch, the eminent German philanthropist, so distinguished for his efforts in the cause of co-operative production.

Such is a hasty description of the exotic attempted to be transplanted to American soil, some understanding of whose nature and growth is necessary to an intelligent appreciation of the labor legislation demanded by our working-classes. It is at once seen the political object in view is, first, the complete democratization of the State. Numbers must rule, irrespective of all extraneous influences, whether of wealth or education. The workingmen outnumber all the remaining classes together, and by virtue of this advantage, made available through universal suffrage, may they hope to accomplish the overthrow of the "Nabobs

of Industry." For, with untiring perseverance, Socialism fans, in the workingman, the notion that capital is merely an oligarchic despotism; that the physical laborer is the true producer, and fairly entitled to the proceeds of his labor, of which, as it is, the capitalist doles out to him a mere pittance, the fraction of his right, reserving to himself the lion's share, under the specious pretexts called profits, insurance, wages of superintendence, and the like. The laborers are the "disinherited classes," "die expropriirte Masse;" while the capitalists are "die wenigen Expropriateurs."[1]

This deep-settled conviction on the part of the laborer that he is the only member of society whose right to existence is unquestionable, gives rise to that strong class pride which is so noticeable at times, and which often has such a strange self-contradictory ring in it.

Holding in view, then, the attitude of the laborer's mind, and the direction of the socialistic instruction to which he submits himself, we shall be better prepared to inspect the following Declaration of Principles, published by the Workingmen's Party after their Convention of 1876, which

[1] "Les Travailleurs, ceux qui produisent tout et qui ne jouissent de rien, ceux qui souffrent de la misère au milieu des produits accumulés, fruits de leurs labeurs et de leurs sueurs, devront-ils donc sans cesse être en butte a l'outrage?"—*Journal Officiel de la Rep. Fran., à Paris,* March 20, 1871.

is subjoined, as the best exposition of their immediate purposes that can be offered:

"1. Eight hours, *for the present*,[1] as a normal working-day, and legal punishment of all violators.

"2. Sanitary inspections of all conditions of labor, means of subsistence and dwellings included.

"3. Establishment of bureaus of labor statistics in all the States, as well as by the national government; the officers of these bureaus to be taken from the ranks of the labor organizations and elected by them.

"4. Prohibition of the use of prison labor by private employers.

"5. Prohibitory laws against the employment of children under 14 years of age in industrial establishments.

"6. Gratuitous instruction in all educational institutions.

"7. Strict laws making employers liable for all accidents to the injury of their employees.

"8. Gratuitous administration of justice in all courts of law.

"9. Abolition of all conspiracy laws.

"10. Railroads, telegraphs, and all means of transportation to pass into the hands of, and to be operated by, the government.

"11. All industrial enterprises to be placed under the control of the government as fast as practicable, and operated by free co-operative trades-unions for the good of the whole people."

A close examination of this programme is interesting as giving a definite, practical idea of the aspira-

[1] The italics are my own.

tions of a not unimportant part of our working population. Joined with demands the reasonableness of whose nature, if not extent, will hardly be questioned, the most significant Socialistic measures are flaunted, culminating appropriately in the last (11th) article. The immediate activity of the labor agitators in the legislative assemblies of the various States seems to be brought to bear upon the enactment of eight-hour laws and the establishment of labor bureaus. To the latter the Socialists attach great importance. A Bureau of Labor Statistics has existed successfully in Massachusetts since 1870, and other States have since imitated her example.[1] The results of these official investigations into the condition of the laboring classes, showing up, as they often do, the most pitiable spectacle, furnish an excellent lever with which to move audiences of workingmen. The professional agitator is usually provided with a complete series of the Annual Reports of the Massachusetts Bureau.

The newspaper strength of the party of Socialism is more considerable than would be expected. Most of the papers, however, are German. It is worthy of notice that although several efforts have

[1] A bill for the establishment of a labor bureau in Connecticut, which was the special protégé of the Socialist element in that State, was recently defeated by a large majority in the Assembly, on the score of economy.

been made to establish an English organ in New York, none have succeeded. The *Labor Standard* published in that city, which was meant to be the principal English exponent of the party, has separated from the Socialists proper, and now devotes its energies to the cause of trades-unions, vicious appeals to the masses, and the most indiscriminate and scurrilous abuse of wealth.[1] In connection with the mention of these newspapers, it may be said that the lack of party discipline appears very strongly in the whole movement. Disagreements are frequent, and there is a constant jealousy between the English- and German-speaking branches.

The Socialistic Labor Party claims to have polled seventy thousand votes at the State elections in the

[1] A recent correspondent of the Berlin *Staats-Socialist* counts up 11 German Socialistic newspapers published in the United States, 7 dailies and 4 weeklies. Of these the leading ones are: *Arbeiter Stimme* (New York), *Vorbote* (Chicago), *Arbeiter von Ohio* (Cincinnati), *Tribüne* (Buffalo), *Vorwaerts* (Milwaukee), *Volksstimme des Westens* (St. Louis).

There are at least seven English organs of Socialism in the United States, as follows: *The National Socialist*, recently started in Cincinnati as chief English organ of the Socialistic Labor Party; *The Socialist* (weekly, Detroit); *The Labor Standard* (New York), which may be reckoned in this connection; *The American Socialist* (Oneida), *The Voice of Labor* (St. Louis), *Emancipator* (Cincinnati), *The People* (Pittsburg).

In addition to which may be mentioned a Bohemian paper published in New York, the *Delnicke Listy* (daily and weekly), and a Scandinavian weekly published in Chicago, *Den Nye Tid.*

fall of 1877. Since then, if events in San Francisco, Oakland, Chicago, and other cities furnish a true index, the party has increased rather than diminished. Withal the party does not become more imposing when it is approached more nearly. A closer acquaintance with its men and its paraphernalia introduces one to an amount of ignorance and shiftlessness inconsistent with the inspiration of reverence or fear. It is exposed in an eminent degree to the casualties which hasten the dissolution of political parties. If it carried with it the fate of Communism in America, then all alarm might be easily pacified. But there is in fact no such dependent connection, and the voting force of the party can not be taken to indicate accurately either the strength or weakness of the communistic element in our midst. On the one hand, its voters are for the most part ignorant laborers, and the carefully elaborated systems of Marx and Lassalle are not capable of full and intelligent communication to their untrained minds. They can not appreciate the meaning of the economical change proposed. To them "the emancipation of the working-classes" is simply a magic formula which is to transform, in some way, present evil into vaguely represented future good. It is impossible to say how far many of them would go with their present leaders, should they become more en-

lightened respecting their ultimate destination. On the other hand, it may be safely asserted that all the elements in our society favorable to the spread of Socialism are not to be sought among the formal connections of the Socialistic Labor Party. Many conscious and unconscious contributors to the advancement of communistic ideas stand in no direct relation to the party. And while Socialism is not coextensive with the labor question, yet it is intimately bound up with it. The new philosophy of renovation has a tolerably definite plan, the sum and substance of which is the placing of labor upon a footing totally different from that which it now occupies. It takes hold of the awakening political consciousness of the workingman, and leads it in the desired direction.

It will thus be readily believed that the question as to the actual strength of Socialism in America can not be satisfactorily answered. It is sufficiently difficult to gather into some compact, intelligible form the visionary schemes of the learned radical profession; but nothing could be more evasive of exact measurement than the extent to which the dissatisfaction among the working-classes is leavened with the leaven of Socialism, and the influence generally of ideas which are communistic in their essence and in their legitimate fruits. Still more uncertain would it be to attempt to predict the probabili-

ties of the future. The data necessary to be taken into consideration in making such an estimate are too diverse and minute. Innumerable little, seemingly unimportant vanes which swing and point in the direction of Socialism may be obeying merely a fitful breeze, or indicating the approach of a strong, growing current.

In the countries of the Old World, where social distinctions are closer and more galling, class is arrayed against class, proletariat against bourgeoisie. In the United States the movement works more subtly and none the less dangerously. It is a very thoughtless confidence that points with self-congratulatory finger to the compact strength of the *Social-Demokraten* in Germany.[1] The more democratic constitution of our society keeps the small man more actively alive to his political possibilities, makes him more impatient of the guidance of superior culture, gives, in a word, greater influence to ignorance. Nothing could be more favorable to the designs of Socialism than the widespread and ever-

[1] The Berlin correspondent of the London *Times* writes (March 22d, 1878): "The Socialists in 1871 succeeded in collecting 120,000 votes and returning two members to the German Parliament; in 1874, 34,000 votes and nine members. In 1877 they registered 497,000 votes, deputing twelve members to the National Legislature. In 1877 the total of the enfranchised electors in the German Empire amounted to 8,943,000. Of these, 5,557,700, or about 60 per cent, having voted, it follows that nearly one tenth of all the votes given were Socialistic, an extraordinary result for a movement not thirty years old."

deepening belief in the supreme justice, the unerring efficacy, of the method of counting heads. The prevalent political looseness is a tribute to the numerical God. The strength of the politician is the strength of the crowd. The growing sense of the necessity of conciliating the workingman at the polls is the strongest testimony to his political importance. The Eight-hour Law of 1868 was a significant exhibition of the strength of the laborer even under a hasty, imperfect organization. On the whole, it is to be feared that pernicious labor legislation has many more chances of success in a Washington Congress than in the German Parliament.

Apart from the immediate evil effects of a predominance of popular errors in legislation, there is cause for alarm in the intangible growth of disregard for contractual obligations, and in the increasing habit of looking upon the man of leisure who lives upon his income as a creature whose existence is entirely without justification, taking its extreme form in a grotesquely exaggerated hatred of the bondholder. Just as, likewise, the increasing tendency to look to the state for help, and such popular efforts to widen the sphere of government as the Granger movement, are all more or less significant steps in the general direction of Socialistic conceptions.

Fortunately the American laborer has hitherto

shown less receptivity for the specific doctrines of Marx and Lassalle than was expected of him. That he will remain always as deaf to the Socialist sirens can not be counted upon.

Are there any practical lessons to be learned of Socialism? Men of undoubted ability, information, and thorough study look to a solution of present difficulties by the application of remedies essentially Socialistic. This consideration alone should induce us to approach the subject in the spirit commended by Mr. Spencer, "which is ever ready to suspect that the convictions we entertain are not wholly right, and the adverse convictions are not wholly wrong." Truth is the outcome of the conflict of many theories, and the final line of orderly progress must be the resultant of many antagonistic forces. Before searching, however for the "soul of goodness" which may be supposed to dwell also in Socialism, I wish to point out briefly some fundamental misconceptions which characterize its teachings.

With all the material available for drawing up a heavy indictment against society in its present form, there is still so much of exaggeration in the Socialistic statement of the case, and such a presentation of only one side, as to amount to virtual untruth and cause a distortion of judgment to which the poor man is especially liable. It is not true that all

those who have wealth are wholly given over to selfish indulgence, utterly careless of their less fortunate fellow-men, secure in a calm "unmarred by sound of human sorrow." The reign of selfishness is not all the Socialist paints it. It is not always overlooked that riches bring with them great responsibilities. Sympathy and beneficence are powerful agents in alleviating the ills of life, in dulling the sharp inequalities of existence. They are unceasingly watchful, ingenious in devising, constant in devotion.

It is not true that the State does leave, or ever has left, the poor man unprotected to the mercy of economic laws. The alleviating hand of the State is everywhere seen thrust in to save victims from the effects of their own excesses, or to smooth the path of untoward circumstance. Hospitals, almshouses, sanitary regulations, public provision for popular entertainment, all mark the protecting interference.

It is not true, above all, that every human unit is entitled merely as such to a proportional share of the good things of life. The Socialist makes the problem a merely mathematical one and offers a mathematical solution.

And what standard is there by which a quantum of happiness can be measured out? It illustrates the wide-reaching complexity of the subject that

the theory of happiness must enter so deeply into any thorough discussion of Socialism; and it is to a total omission to consider, or to a fallacious conception of, this very theory that many of the errors of the Socialist philosophy are to be traced. It is a great misfortune that many most important truths, by dint of much repetition, should acquire a contemptible familiarity and be carelessly dismissed into the realm of truism, where they lose their proper, effective influence. After all, are not the greatest ills of life common ills, from which wealth grants no exemption? Does not each new opportunity add the possibility of a new disappointment, and the more refined sensibility learn a new and keener pang in sorrow? The Socialist philosophers measure off the happiness of class against class with rash confidence.

Or who shall measure desert? "À chacun selon ses forces, à chacun selon ses besoins," says Cabet; À chacun suivant sa capacité, à chaque capacité suivant ses œuvres," says Saint-Simon. These are idle phrases. Where is there a power to tell us which has deserved most of humanity: a Newton, a Harvey, or a Wilberforce? Can society ever repay Shakespeare, Goethe, and Dante? In the infinite, imperceptible differences of individual and individual, is there any hope for the maker of categories? But Socialism, with all its assumption and sugges-

tion of untruth, has, first of all, this good effect: it keeps conscience alive and intelligence busy about real difficulties, pushing them to the front with ever-increasing insistence. The problem of a labor population, doing the hand-work of civilization, while its bounteous results lie close around them in tempting, unattainable proximity, and education steals away the dull bliss of ignorance, must be the peculiar Gordian knot of an age whose practice is political equality and whose ideal is universal enlightenment. It is here that antiquity becomes barren of instructive examples. The ancients could conceive of no perfect state in which the necessary, burdensome, disagreeable, physical duties of life were not performed by slaves. It was quite in keeping with the Greek contempt for the laboring classes when Plato constituted a class of slaves in his republic, and assigned to all artisans, laborers, and merchants a position little worthier, excluding them from political rights. "The manual arts," says Aristotle, "are base and unworthy of a citizen. The majority of them deform the body. They make it necessary to sit in the shade or near a fire. They leave time neither for the republic nor for one's friends."

In Rome the number of the slave population rose steadily as the simplicity of Roman life gave way to

the multiplying innovations of progress;[1] and in Europe throughout the middle ages, and thereafter until the great political awakening, the "manual arts" were performed by classes politically subject. This difference of itself creates a gap between ancient and modern democracies wide enough to interfere with hasty inferences.

Under modern conditions, with the enormous multiplication of industries to correspond with the elaboration and multiplication of wants, it seems probable that the number of those who are engaged in performing the baser duties of life must continue to bear a large, perhaps an increasing, proportion to the number of those who enjoy extra opportunities of leisure and self-indulgence; while the tendency of the introduction of machinery to reduce labor more and more to a monotonous, mechanical task gives some apparent foundation to the alarm lest, in the natural course of events, the workman may degenerate into an eating, sleeping automaton little better than the machine he tends.

With regard to the proportion of laborers, narrowly socalled, in a complex society where occupations glide one into another through indistinguishable gradations, it is impossible, of course, to obtain satisfactory statistics, any thing that will give more than a general notion of the state of the

[1] Mommsen, Röm. Geschichte, ii., 81, 396, and iii., 510, 511, 531.

case. It will be evident that accurate statistics giving the distribution of wealth are still less available. Leone Levi, in 1867, estimated the working-classes of England at twenty-two millions, earning yearly £85 per family, and the middle and higher classes at eight millions, earning £193 per family.[1]

With regard to the United States I have been unable to find even approximate figures; and it should be borne in mind that the widely different condition of land ownership in the two countries must largely modify any reasoning from English to American circumstances. But Prof. Wagner has certified that in Germany, where there is still a sturdy peasant class of allodial proprietors, the same tendencies as in England are to be clearly traced; tendencies which he is inclined to explain by a reference to the rapid growth of large private individual and corporate enterprises. The industrial conditions in the United States being essentially the same with those of the highest-developed

[1] Leone Levi, Wages and Earnings of the Working Classes. London, 1867.

According to another calculation, taken from the results of the English income tax and combined with the labors of Baxter and Rodbertus, there were in 1867 in England 8500 persons enjoying each an income of over £5000. These 8500 made up .062 per cent of the total self-supporting population, their total income being 15.4 per cent of the total valued income of the United Kingdom; while (taking an estimate of an opponent of Socialism) 4,519,000 self-supporting persons had an income of less than £30.—Prof. AD. WAGNER, in the *Staats-Socialist*, Feb. 3, 1878.

modern countries, and in view of facts patent to the observation of all, it can hardly be asserted that we enjoy any peculiar dispensation from this same movement, defining more and more sharply the contrast between wealth and poverty. Every year makes dimmer with us the peculiar conditions which render a new country less exposed to the evils attendant upon a thickly settled population.

Emigration suggests itself as one mode of relief, and in this direction we certainly possess unusual advantages. But emigration, while always an exceedingly valuable safety-valve deserving of the most careful attention on the part of the economist and statesman, is but a temporary makeshift, and does not contribute much, even temporarily, toward the solution of the real labor question. It may draw off the surplus population and give some relief at times of great pressure, but the relief is in a sense only a surface one. The same difficulties are left behind; the same industrial methods, the same division into employers and employed, capitalists and laborers; the same social inequalities.

One remedy for this encroaching dualism seems indeed to be less applicable in America than in the countries of the Old World. The dream of co-operative production and industrial partnership dawned upon anxious students and philanthropists with all the hope of a long-waited-for inspiration,

promising in the fullness of time to accomplish wonders toward dispersing the shadows which hang over modern progress. The example of Mr. Briggs, proprietor of the Methley Collieries, and of M. LeClaire, house-decorator in Paris, seemed about to become models for a most desirable transformation in the methods of industry. But already faith in this supreme remedy is faltering. After the first activity in the formation of co-operative associations, followed a corresponding lull which does not seem to be often broken. Such associations, too, where they have existed successfully have discovered an irresistible tendency in almost all cases to degenerate into joint-stock companies employing their labor, thus leaving the kernel of the labor question untouched. The familiar example of the Rochdale Pioneers is an interesting case in point. The story of those sturdy workingmen has been told again and again, and its recital will never cease to be full of stirring encouragement and instruction. But they have now become virtually a joint-stock company. Mr. Thornton laments that they have fallen away from the principles of their foundation. They are brilliant examples of workingmen who have raised themselves out of their class: they have not raised their class. An English economist, visiting Rochdale after an absence of a number of years, has described with some bitterness the sons of the

Pioneers living in luxury and imitating the airs and fashions of the wealthy of all times.[1] This is why the Socialist leaders drill their followers into unflinching opposition to all co-operation which is not at once thorough, sweeping, and directed by the State itself. It is easy to understand why Lassalle should say of all private co-operative attempts that they tended to create a "fifth estate."

If, then, the existence of a large working-class is an inevitable fact, from which no theory save that of the Socialist proposes an escape, and if at the same time the political equalization of all classes calls for the universal diffusion of education, the difficulty is reduced to the question, How shall the condition of labor be so ordered that its burdens may be consistent with at least a moderate degree of intellectual enlightenment? The most sanguine optimism can hardly look for any immediate satis-

[1] "In spite of these marked advantages, however, we have to note that co-operation in mechanical industry has achieved a very slight and even doubtful success."—Prof. WALKER, *The Wages Question*, 272.

"Co-operation in this country has hitherto been seldom applied to the production of wealth. Probably at least nine tenths of the existing co-operative societies carry on those ordinary retail businesses, the function of which is to distribute rather than produce wealth. These distributive societies, which are now generally known as co-operative stores, are wanting in the most essential characteristics of co-operation, for they do not necessarily establish a union—or as it has been described, a margin of capital and labor."—Prof. FAWCETT, "Position and Prospects of Co-operation," *Fortnightly Review*, Feb. 1, 1874.

factory answer. Many thoughtful observers view the situation with little hope, and, while they reject the solution of the Socialist, see no promise of substantial improvement under the present methods.

Under these circumstances a heavy duty falls upon those who make a special study of social and economic conditions. And among the effects of the agitation of the working-classes under the leadership of Socialism, this one is perhaps most noticeable: that it provokes a continual proving and remodeling of the results of politico-economic and social science. The general movement at the head of which are the *Katheder-Socialisten* marks the influence. It is necessary to mention only such names as Cliffe Leslie and Thornton in England, Laveleye in Belgium, Leroy-Beaulieu in France, and Wagner, Schmoller, and Schäffle in Germany, to sufficiently designate the movement. The old school of political economy, under the leadership of Adam Smith, Ricardo, and J. B. Say, clung too closely, say these new men, to abstract principles and natural economic laws. They trusted too implicitly to the deductive method. The inductive method must be more thoroughly introduced into this as into the other sciences; more attention must be given to statistical and historical investigation. The psychological dependence of all economic phenomena must be continually kept in mind, and the impossibility

of deducing rigid, scientific laws from the uncertain, variable qualities of human nature must be recognized.

Marx starts with the law of Adam Smith that all wealth is the result of labor, and leads the mind from this dogma with faultless logic to the condemnation of private property.[1] Lassalle demonstrates the hopelessness of the prospect for labor, from Malthus and Ricardo. But the economists of the new school shake off the burden of defending old dogmas; and Laveleye, for example, denies the universal and uncompromising application of "das eherne Lohngesetz," as announced by Lassalle. He maintains that increased well-being among the working-classes does not lead inevitably to an increase in the size of families.

"En effet," he says, "la France est, avec la Suisse et la Norwége, le pays où la propriété se trouve entre le plus grand nombre de mains, et où le bien-être est le plus également réparti, et c'est aussi le pays où la population s'accroît le plus lentement. Depuis vingt ans, malgré d'effroyables crises, la

[1] Marx borrowed this, as most of his system, from Rodbertus, who called his theory "eine consequente Durchführung des von Smith in die Wissenschaft eingeführten und von der Ricardo'schen Schule noch tiefer begründeten Satzes, dass alle Güter wirthschaftlich nur als Product der Arbeit anzusehen sind, nichts als Arbeit kosten."—R. MEYER, *Emancipationskampf des vierten Standes*, i., 44.

richesse y a augmentée plus que partout ailleurs, et la population est restée presque stationnaire."[1]

The influence of the Katheder-Socialists, whose activity is, in a sense, due to the irritant Socialism, appears especially in the struggle which they have entered upon with the old, strict *laisser-faire* conception of the proper functions of government. While the Manchester men maintain that the interference of the State has been already carried too far, that the happiness of all will be best served in the end by allowing the individual the utmost possible freedom in the pursuit of his own happiness, these new economists, on the other hand, assert that the possibilities of the State as a directing, moderating influence have not been sufficiently recognized, and that the use of the governmental power to curb excesses of private competition and to put some limit to private accumulation of wealth would remove many

[1] *Revue des Deux Mondes,* Dec. 15, 1876, p. 882. In support of Laveleye's assertion another authority may be quoted here. According to a Report of the French Bureau of General Statistics (cited in Journal of the Statistical Society, London, vol. xxxvii., 540), the average wages of laborers in France, exclusive of Paris, amounted in 1853 to 96 centimes a day; this had risen in 1821 to 1 franc 40 centimes, an increase of somewhat more than 45 per cent; and as during the same eighteen years, it was estimated, the cost of necessaries rose about 33 per cent, the result would indicate a considerable rise in *real wages.*

"Quand Arthur Young voyait en France le sol divisé en un très-grand nombre de mains, il prédisait que le pays se transformerait en une garenne de lapins: c'est tout le contraire, qui a eu lieu."—*Revue des Deux Mondes, ib.*, 882.

causes of danger by alleviating the present great social inequalities. They would hardly indeed go to the length of any thing approaching the Socialist claim that capital loan funds should be established by the State. The experience of the government of '48 has warned all imitators from that ground.[1] There is, it may be supposed, some happy point of balance between the two extremes of "administrative nihilism" and production under governmental direction. Around this point the contest is progressing.

This will be perhaps sufficient to suggest the general character of that movement in the field of politico-economic science, whose existence indicates

[1] The Constituent Assembly (France) voted in July, 1848, to appropriate three million francs to lend to workingmen who wished to form productive associations. Sixty-one such associations were formed; ten years later there were but nine of them left altogether, only *four* of which could be said in any sense to be prospering.—See VILLETART, *Histoire de l'Internationale*, 26.

Even private attempts in the same direction proved equally disastrous. The "Société du Credit au Travail," formed by M. Béluze in 1863 at Paris, perished before 1870, similarly with the celebrated effort of the emperor to establish a "Caisse des Associations Cooperatives."—*Ibid.*, ch. ii., sec. 4.

All observers have remarked that outside aid, whether from the State or from philanthropic individuals, has always exerted a rapidly demoralizing effect upon attempts at co-operative production.

Of the co-operative associations above referred to, established on the credit voted by the Assembly in 1848, Laveleye has stated that only one remained in 1875 ("Tailleurs de limes").—*Revue des Deux Mondes*, *ub. sup.*, 890.

the one great good which has come out of Socialism. This good is seen in the unexampled activity with which the study of social conditions has been prosecuted during the past twenty-five years. Before that, it seemed that the science of political economy would settle down with unprogressive complacency to the contemplation of its accomplished labors. Now it is recognized that students of social phenomena must not be content to formulate difficulties logically and accurately; they must be ever eagerly seeking remedies and improved methods. This activity is itself the safest promise of future amelioration.

Recent investigations lead to the belief that in primitive times property was held in common and not in severalty. It would be indeed strange if events were tending, as many assert, to a return to a state of things characteristic of a cruder period. Such a return is difficult to conceive of. To one who looks upon the advance of the whole as a constant process of differentiation, due to the several struggles of individuals, the adoption of any system whose inevitable principle would be the weighting of the swift to accommodate the slow must seem in the highest degree improbable. But it is characteristic of the Socialist that he is blind to prosaic facts. When actualities are repulsive to his theory, he ignores them. He feeds upon exaggerations.

He makes bold offers to cure with his patent remedies the ills which beset the social body. To offset these the sober student ventures but modest promises. The one seems to preach only patience, while the other preaches emancipation. But if, bowing before the invincible destroyers Disease and Death, we study human nature in its weakness and degradation as well as in its beauty and strength, not forgetting its enthusiasm, its poetry, its self-devotion, but remembering, too, its every-day vices, its sordid aims, its petty passions, its impotence in the midst of its greatest conquests; if we see in the history of institutions a record of imperfect devices hammered out as well as may be through centuries of hard experience—then we shall cherish no sanguine visions of the final perfection of human society, we shall resign with less regret the millennial reign of peace, plenty, and universal happiness which is so confidently promised by these would-be reformers with their self-satisfied wisdom and cheap nostrums. Then, too, we shall be in a position to maintain that, considering the unmeasured slowness of all growth, it can not with truth be asserted that the institution of private property has yet developed to the utmost its capacity to cope with the difficulties of social existence. Integral improvement must be the sum of infinitesimal individual efforts, and what abundant opportunities exist in the life of

each citizen to increase his own contribution to the general advance!

To this end there will be necessary a wider-spread, more intelligent sense of personal responsibility, issuing in practical doing, affecting all the personal relations of life, establishing more kindly sympathy between employer and employed, introducing generosity and liberal-mindedness into the management of great enterprises, giving, in a word, to education more effective moral influence. And while so much faith is put in as ort of half-education of the working masses which in many cases raises them no higher than discontent, is there not great room for hope that a wider, better-directed education of those who already call themselves the educated classes may do much to increase the general sense of the responsibilities of existence, and thus weaken the power of that selfishness whose grievous results are undeniable?

Meanwhile voices come to us with warnings that democracies are peculiarly exposed to the dangers arising out of inequality of social conditions. The stories of the democracies of the past are told at length in order to point the moral.[1] But there

[1] "In the author's opinion, modern democracies will only escape the destiny of ancient democracies by adopting laws such as shall secure the distribution of property among a large number of holders, and shall establish a very general equality of conditions."—LAVELEYE, *Primitive Property*, xxxiii.

are considerations which would strengthen Americans in the belief that they have less to fear than the countries of the Old World from immediate Communistic efforts, whether of the revolutionary or of the insidious orderly type. Any one who comes into personal contact with this ultra-radical movement will hardly fail to be impressed with the fact that there is no better cure for radical leanings in the individual than a little worldly success. The more able, active spirits among the Communists, those who constitute the class of men under whose leadership alone Communism could ever be dangerous, are being continually won from the cause by the acquisition of property and social standing. It is indeed more fitting that the merely physical duties of society should be performed by those who are intellectually less capable. And in the presence of the difficulties arising out of social inequality, it is the great advantage which democracies possess over more aristocratic forms that they offer superior facilities for a constant sifting process, allowing the less energetic to sink, the more energetic to rise to

"We should not forget this important lesson taught us by the history of political and social institutions. Democracies which fail to preserve equality of conditions, and in which two hostile classes, the rich and the poor, find themselves face to face, are doomed to anarchy and subsequent despotism. The recent strikes in the United States show that the danger there is already near the surface."—*Ibid.*, xliii.

the top. It will be well, then, to bear this continually in mind: the more complete the absence of class barriers, the freer and more thorough and constant the interchange between class and class, the easier the exit of excellence from outgrown material surroundings, the more sure will be the average progress, and the less opportunity will there be of the Communist disaffection becoming wide-spread, deep-seated, and powerful.

An attempt has thus been made to suggest the general features of a subject whose thorough treatment would require much wider limits than those of the present essay. I shall be satisfied if I have succeeded in giving a true impression of its importance. An examination of the evidences of Communistic tendencies in America has led me to the conclusion that all such tendencies of sufficient importance to merit serious consideration are to be associated with the new Socialism.

I have, then, endeavored to suggest the circumstances of the birth of Socialism, to trace briefly its rise in America, to describe its political mechanism, and to give some notion of its political strength. I have endeavored to convey a dispassionate idea of its spirit and purposes, with a general outline of the political system which it aims to establish. While pointing out some of the misconceptions which

underlie the Socialist philosophy, I have endeavored to elicit the practical lessons which are to be learned of the movement. I have attempted to show that it throws up a true difficulty, one which will face us as it faces Europe, as it must face every free, enlightened, thickly settled country.

It may not be out of place to add one word, in conclusion, with reference generally to the temper of Socialism. There is an undefined feeling, characteristic of our age—characteristic more particularly, perhaps, of our own people—which I can not better designate than by calling it impatience of the slowness of growth. Advances in physical discovery, mechanical invention, and material comfort, following in bewildering succession, have a tendency to promote the rise of a restless eagerness regarding the future of the race; to cultivate an overweening confidence in man's power; to awaken unfounded hopes of the perfection of institutions and the general diffusion of happiness. It is right to expect an increase of general happiness from improvement in social methods. But it is lost sight of that the condition of the social body is more intimately and dependently related with man's moral nature than with his intellectual conquests or his mere material status. Indeed, moral growth on the one hand and material growth on the other, so far from proceeding *pari passu*, seem, at times, to be in direct opposition.

There has, it will be generally admitted, been no moral advance to correspond with tremendous material strides. The failure of happiness, then, to meet expectation occasions a revolt, and this revolt finds an expression in Socialism. Keenly aware of the presence of ills, confident of their own power to heal, disregarding the delicacy of the organism with which they experiment, the Socialist physicians approach with easy assurance, nay, with criminal recklessness, a disease which it is the life-task of the world to understand and cure. In order to create an opportunity for the application of their boasted remedies, they dare to appeal without scruple to the disorganizing forces of society. But let him who would summon spirits beware lest, when they come, he feel no power to govern their unforeseen willfulness, and can find no magic formula to send them back to their dark hiding-place. When the fiendish antics of his strange guests fill him with terror and threaten him with desolation, the ready-tongued apprentice may be glad to call upon the slow, resistless, organizing power of order, the power which builds and builds through the patient ages, careless as well of the type as of the single life.

THE END.

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